

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Clara & Clarissa Pritchard

Clara H.P. Pritchard L.L.D. August 1892 – July 2, 1916

Clarissa A.B. Pritchard Lopez Agosta L.L.D. August 1892 – October 8, 1969

Old Red Church Cemetery, Tivoli

Grey granite monument with big Mason symbol toward the northwest of the cemetery

NEW YORK HERALD, SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 1914.—MAGAZINE SECTION.

Twins Are Youngest Women Lawyers in New York State

CONSTANT companions from babyhood, graduating from the Tivoli High School together, studying in and being graduated from the Albany Law School together and admitted to the Bar together, the Misses Clara and Clarissa Pritchard, twins, are now intending to become law partners. The twins are said to be the youngest woman lawyers in New York State, having been admitted to the Bar last month, just three months after they became twenty-one years old.

The girls admit that they did not take up the study of law by their own choice entirely, although their mother was one of the first women to be admitted to the Bar of Dutchess county. Mrs. Pritchard was admitted a dozen years ago. She died two years later. The twins studied law at the suggestion of their father, Dr. Churchill Pritchard, one of the most prominent physicians in northern Dutchess county.

"We are perfectly satisfied that father's suggestion was all for the best," said Miss Clara Pritchard, in speaking of Dr. Pritchard picking out the law for the twins' work. "When we were graduated from high school we were undecided as to what line, if any, we should take up. We are naturally active and felt that we should enter some business or profession. Father's suggestion that we try law did not appeal to us at first, but we concluded to give it a try. The more we learned of law the more we liked it, and so we have unanimously decided to form a law firm and work hard, just like other lawyers."

"We have decided to spend the first year apart. This will give us each an opportunity to acquire information and experience from two widely separate sources. We are connected with law offices in Albany and seldom meet in a business way. At the end of the year we



MISS CLARISSA PRITCHARD

MISS CLARA PRITCHARD.

probably will hang out a shingle in front of our own office. We haven't decided whether it will be 'Pritchard & Pritchard' or something else. It won't be 'Pritchard Sisters,' anyway.

"There is a wide field for a woman in the practice of law. Professional association with men lawyers has not led me to discover anything in their treatment of me to indicate that they regarded me as an intruder in their field. They have always been most considerate. I am sure we will find our work so far as this feature is concerned congenial.

"Whether we shall always continue our law practice up-State or go to New York remains to be seen. We probably will remain where we are, however. While the field may be larger in New York, competition is keener, and conditions in many ways are different from those existing in the smaller cities.

"Success in the practice of law, like a business proposition, and we intend to that in any other line, depends upon hard work because we are going to work hard. We have taken up law strictly as hard."

law required that a candidate for a certificate to practise law should serve a year in a law office in addition to spending two years in a law school. It was optional as to whether the year in an office should be served before or after the college course, so the girls chose the college course first. When they became twenty-one years old they immediately entered their names as candidates for the next Bar examination, which was held during the second week of November. They passed their examination with honors and were granted certificates by Judge Franklin M. Danaher, secretary of the State Law Examiners.

The young women are accomplished musicians and have always been of a literary turn. They are believers in woman suffrage. They have never taken any active interest in the movement. They are of about the same build and strongly resemble each other, with the exception of the color of their eyes. Miss Clara has dark brown eyes. Miss Clarissa's are blue.

New Seal for London City.

ONE of the most important emblems of a civic state which has ever existed in the history of the world—the official seal of the Corporation of London—has at last reached the end of its historic career, and in order that it may not be used for nefarious purposes, now that it has been retired from its public labors, has been "broken," instead of being placed in a museum as a memento of its long time of usefulness. The seal was first made 522 years ago and has been in constant use ever since. Although the seal was not larger than an American dollar its weight and importance were not at all relative to its size. It has played its part in all civic affairs since 1381, when the first London seal was "broken" and the new one substituted because the first seal was "too small, rude and ancient." The seal which was substituted for it had also become worn and blurred. It is estimated that it was used 1,500 times each year.

The Pritchard twins were born in Tivoli, and until they began their law work lived there. Tivoli, which has a population of a little more than a thousand, is situated thirty miles north of Poughkeepsie, the county seat of Dutchess county. The young lawyers have not yet entered any cases in that county.

Being graduated from the Tivoli High School three years ago, they immediately entered the Albany Law School. The career.

Twin Lawyers

Clara and Clarissa Pritchard were born in August of 1892, fraternal twin daughters of Mary E.H. and Dr. Churchill Pritchard of Ontario, Canada, who resided in Tivoli. Their father was a doctor, and their mother was one of the first (if not perhaps the first) female lawyer to be admitted to the Dutchess County bar. She had an office at 50 Market Street in Poughkeepsie. She was appointed to the southern district court of New York on January 26, 1904, but died just two months later on March 20, 1904, at only 39 years of age. She left her

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husband and 11-year-old daughters and was buried, presumably with her family, back in Ontario.

The twins attended high school in Tivoli. As it came time to decide what they would do with their lives, their father encouraged them to take after their mother. They studied law in Albany for two years, then worked in the field for one year before taking and passing the bar exam in Dutchess County in November of 1913 at just 21 years of age. In the magazine section of the *New York Herald* of January 4, 1914, these young women were featured in an article about their achievement. Clara was quoted as saying that there was “a wide field for a woman in the practice of law” and that men in the field had “always been most considerate” to them. The article said they were also accomplished musicians, “have always been of a literary turn” and believed in women’s suffrage. At the time they were not sure where they would set up their practice but were thinking about being partners.

Clara took ill with diphtheria and died just two years after the *Herald* article in 1916 in Tivoli. Clarissa continued to practice law and married Eusébio López Agosta who was originally from Puerto Rico. She lived a long life and died in 1969 at 77 years of age.